

Power Networking Tips

By Barbara Gibson, ABC

THE GOLDEN RULE Work for your network. Don't look at networking with the idea of "what can it do for me?" See yourself as a resource for every one of your contacts. Be a matchmaker. Send business leads and job leads to your contacts. Like most things in life, what you get out of your network depends on what you put into it first. **The most powerful network is the one that is made up of people who owe you favors.**

1. Remember that everyone else in the room has sweaty palms, too. Concentrate on making other people feel at ease, not on your own insecurities.
2. Wear your nametag on your right side, as close to your face as possible, with your first name printed as large as possible. Always include your last name and company. Tip for job seekers: in the space where other people write their company name, write in "(looking for a job)." It's a great icebreaker.
3. Never get caught without a business card. Carry a stack to every event. Tuck extras in your wallet, computer bag, glove compartment, etc.
4. At networking events, keep your own cards in your left-hand pocket; place other people's in your right-hand pocket. Perfect a quick-draw technique.
5. Learn to "work the room." Don't gravitate toward people you already know well. Don't sit with people you work with. Make it your goal to meet at least ten new people at every event.
6. Develop and rehearse a 30-second "elevator speech"—two or three sentences that describe who you are, what you do and the kind of contacts you hope to make. For example, "Hi, I'm Barbara Gibson. I've recently launched a new business doing media spokesperson assessment and development—a whole new category of business. I generally work through the PR professionals that support spokespeople, either the in-house PR people in large companies or PR agencies, and I work with clients all over the world."
7. Try giving and asking for two business cards – one to keep and one to pass along. Be a networking matchmaker.
8. As soon as possible after meeting a new contact, jot down notes on the back of the person's business card. Your notes (for your eyes only) should include memory joggers (mustache, red hair), reminders of where you met, what you discussed, things you have in common.
9. Follow up! Send a short note or e-mail to strengthen the initial contact. This is where your notes from #8 come in handy. For example, "I enjoyed meeting you at last week's IABC meeting. It's good to know I'm not the only cricket fan in the group. I'll keep my eyes open for a photographer for that project you mentioned. Hope to see you again soon." Always enclose your business card or contact details again.
10. Maintain contact. Develop a tickler system to remind you to touch base at least every 6-12 months. Clip articles that might interest them, send invitations or comp tickets to company events, e-mail a cartoon, or better yet, send them a business contact that will benefit them.
11. You can do #9 and #10 even if you haven't actually met! For example, you attended a luncheon meeting and the keynote speaker is someone you'd like to get to know, but didn't get the opportunity to meet (or did, but it was scarcely more than a handshake). Try to get a card, or obtain a mailing or e-mail address from the event organizer, and send a short note saying "I heard your presentation at yesterday's IABC meeting, but didn't get the chance to tell you how much I enjoyed it. I hope I get the chance to meet you sometime soon." Again, include your card or contact details, and plan for further follow-up. If you get the opportunity to meet in person, introduce yourself with a reminder of where you saw them before, along with a mention of your note. You'll now have the beginnings of a solid contact.



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